

Four Poems from More Cheap Thrills

Planning A Career: I

Attend a free poetry reading; wear a cape, muss your hair, and try to meet a pleasant old lady. Have tea with her, smile a lot, and try to borrow \$50 (more if possible). Spend the money on tuition to a good Writers' Conference; meet another lady to have tea with. Borrow \$1,000 (more if possible) to start a lit magazine; promise you'll put her on the cover. Write letters to 500 well-known poets asking for poems; four will probably respond. Get some young chicks on the staff; promise them the cover, but get their money. Put out one good issue with slick paper, photos, poems, and send copies to every NYC publishing house.

Wait a week. Go to NYC and introduce yourself to the girls who read unsolicited novels. Show them your mag; promise them the cover for (non-existent) #2, but get their money. Also get to know their bosses; promise them the cover.

Write a novel about your month-long rise to fame and give it to the ugliest boss lady. This is how those books get published.

Planning A Career: II

Write poems about movie stars. Research gossip magazines for details; clarity and superlatives are all that's necessary, but leave one line suspiciously oblique -- infer that you know something. That you once babysat for Paul & Joanne Newman; that you were outside Sardi's, parked cars at El Capitan, emptied wastebaskets at The Hungry I. Leave room for doubt; he/she will fill in on the dotted line.

Wait a month. If they are not jet-setting you will get a thank-you letter, perhaps a check for \$5; if they want to know more, suggest an editor at Cosmopolitan wants to print these poems, but for \$100 you will refrain. They will say go ahead, or pay you, or say kiss off -- try to meet an editor at Cosmopolitan, and also an autograph collector who pays.